

**Proclamation 7165—National African American History Month, 1999**

*February 1, 1999*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

The story of African Americans is one of strength, suffering, courage, and triumph. Arriving on these shores more than 350 years ago, African Americans have been a central element of our national identity, and their long journey from the horrors of slavery and oppression through the struggle for equality and justice informs our national experience. By observing African American History Month each year, we not only remember the tragic errors of our past, but also celebrate the achievements of African Americans and the promise they hold for our future as one America.

This year's theme, "The Legacy of African American Leadership for the Present and the Future," is a recognition that we can draw strength and inspiration to face our challenges from the vision, voices, character, and accomplishments of the many extraordinary African Americans who have gone before us. These gifted men and women, from every walk of life and every field of endeavor, were shaped but not defeated by their experience of racism, and their response was to move our Nation closer to our ideals of freedom, justice, and equality.

We remember Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth, whose powerful firsthand accounts of their lives as slaves and the moral strength of their argument helped create the momentum that brought an end to slavery in America. In our own century, we all have benefited from the skills, determination, and indefatigable spirit of such African American leaders as Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, A. Philip Randolph, Ella Baker, Thurgood Marshall, Medgar Evers, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Whether organizing peaceful demonstrations, creating educational and economic opportunities, fighting Jim Crow laws in the courts, or conducting peaceful protests, they awakened the conscience of our Nation and won signal vic-

tories for justice and human dignity. We recall the courage of the Little Rock Nine, who opened the doors of American education for so many other deserving young people. We remember the strength of Rosa Parks, who stood up for civil rights by sitting down where she belonged. We continue to draw inspiration from the leadership of Dorothy Height, who has done so much to strengthen families and communities not only in our own Nation, but also around the world.

These and so many other African American leaders have enriched our national life and shaped our national character. They have challenged us to recognize that America's racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity will be among our greatest strengths in the 21st century.

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim February 1999 as National African American History Month. I call upon public officials, educators, librarians, and all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs that raise awareness and appreciation of African American history.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this first day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

**William J. Clinton**

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on February 4.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting Budget Rescissions and Deferrals**

*February 1, 1999*

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

In accordance with the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, I herewith report three rescissions of

budget authority, totaling \$35 million; one new deferral of \$185 million of budget authority; and, two revised deferrals of budget authority, totaling \$1.5 billion.

The proposed rescissions affect the programs of the Department of Interior, Unanticipated Needs for Natural Disasters, and International Assistance Programs. The proposed deferrals affect programs of the Department of State and International Assistance Programs.

Sincerely,

**William J. Clinton**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

**Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in Boston, Massachusetts**

*February 2, 1999*

Thank you very much. Up to this point, I've had a great time here today. I could have listened to this go on forever. I want to say to all those here—to Elaine and to Alan and everyone who worked on this event; to Governor Romer and Len Barrack and all of those—to Joe Andrew and others who will carry on with the Democratic Party; to Joan Menard and Mayor Menino; and especially to Senator Kennedy, Senator Kerry, Congressmen Moakley, and Meehan and McGovern and Tierney, Capuano, and the other members of the delegation, how profoundly grateful I am to be here; how grateful I am for every occasion in which I have come to Boston or the State of Massachusetts since 1991; for the kindness and support that you have given to me, to Hillary, to the Vice President, to all of us; for being the State which has consistently given the Clinton-Gore team the highest percentage of the popular vote; for sticking with the agenda that we have set forth for America and sending a magnificent congressional delegation. I am very grateful.

This morning, Hillary asked me what I was going to do in Boston and I said, "Oh, I'm going up there to canonize Steve Grossman."

[*Laughter*] And she said, "Bill, don't say that. That's the wrong religion." [*Laughter*] But that's basically what we've done. [*Laughter*] And every word deserved.

When I met Steve many years ago, and he was running APEC and I was a young Governor trying to learn about the complexities of the Middle East, I never could have dreamed that I would become so heavily involved in the peace process there, that I would have the opportunity to do what we have been able to do, to move it forward.

You know, when you think about the condition of the Democratic Party when Steve became chairman, and you think about some of the difficulties we've faced in the Middle East—if you sort of assume that he helped give me the Presidency and I helped give him the Democratic Party, it's hard to imagine who got the better deal on some days. [*Laughter*] I think neither of us would trade the opportunity and the challenge for anything. And so, again, I just want to say thank you.

Let me also say that there is another reason that we did as well as we did in 1998, and that is that we stood for something, for all the American people, and for all kinds of Americans. I just want to mention one other person who is here—I can't resist. Her presence here, I understand, is a birthday present. And tomorrow Rosina Grattaroti will celebrate her 90th birthday. I'd like to ask her to stand up. Where are you? There she is. [*Applause*] Happy birthday. I asked Mayor Menino if he knew her; he said, "Yes, she comes from an old Irish family in town." [*Laughter*]

But let me say to all of you, in 1992 you gave me a chance to try to lead this country in a new direction, based on old values. I said over and over again—sometimes to suspicious audiences—that I wanted the Democratic Party to go back to its old values with new ideas; that our mission would always be to provide opportunity to all Americans, to call forth all citizens to a sense of responsibility, and to give us a real sense of community.

I still think if there is one idea that sort of often divides us from our friends in the Republican Party, it is our passionate belief in community, the idea that we are interdependent, that none of us is better than any